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AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

On page 3, lines 4-11, please replace the paragraph with the following:

-- In one embodiment, R₂ is an ester (R_{2a}C(O)O-), a carbamate (R_{2a}R_{2b}NC(O)O-), a carbonate (R_{2a}OC(O)O-), or a thiocarbamate **thiocarbonate** (R_{2a}SC(O)O-) wherein R_{2a} and R_{2b} are independently hydrogen, hydrocarbyl, substituted hydrocarbyl or heterocyclo. In a preferred embodiment, R₂ is an ester (R_{2a}C(O)O-), wherein R_{2a} is aryl or heteroaromatic. In another preferred embodiment, R₂ is an ester (R_{2a}C(O)O-), wherein R_{2a} is substituted or unsubstituted phenyl, furyl, thienyl, or pyridyl. In one particularly preferred embodiment, R₂ is benzyloxy. --.

On page 3, lines 12-33, please replace the paragraph with the following:

While R₉ is keto in one embodiment of the present invention, in other embodiments R₉ may have the alpha or beta stereochemical configuration, preferably the beta stereochemical configuration, and may be, for example, α- or β-hydroxy or α- or β-acyloxy. For example, when R₉ is acyloxy, it may be an ester (R_{9a}C(O)O-), a carbamate (R_{9a}R_{9b}NC(O)O-), a carbonate (R_{9a}OC(O)O-), or a thiocarbamate **thiocarbonate** (R_{9a}SC(O)O-) wherein R_{9a} and R_{9b} are independently hydrogen, hydrocarbyl, substituted hydrocarbyl or heterocyclo. If R₉ is an ester (R_{9a}C(O)O-), R_{9a} is substituted or unsubstituted alkyl, substituted or unsubstituted alkenyl, substituted or unsubstituted aryl or substituted or unsubstituted heteroaromatic. Still more preferably, R₉ is an ester (R_{9a}C(O)O-), wherein R_{9a} is substituted or unsubstituted phenyl, substituted or unsubstituted furyl, substituted or unsubstituted thienyl, or substituted or unsubstituted pyridyl. In one embodiment R₉ is (R_{9a}C(O)O-) wherein R_{9a} is methyl, ethyl, propyl (straight, branched or cyclic), butyl (straight, branched or cyclic), pentyl, (straight, branched or cyclic), or hexyl (straight, branched or cyclic). In another embodiment R₉ is (R_{9a}C(O)O-) wherein R_{9a} is substituted methyl, substituted ethyl, substituted propyl (straight, branched or cyclic), substituted butyl (straight, branched or cyclic), substituted pentyl, (straight, branched or cyclic), or substituted hexyl (straight, branched or cyclic) wherein the substituent(s) is/are selected from the group consisting

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of heterocyclo, alkoxy, alkenoxy, alkynoxy, aryloxy, hydroxy, protected hydroxy, keto, acyloxy, nitro, amino, amido, thiol, ketal, acetal, ester and ether moieties, but not phosphorous containing moieties.